

**BEFORE**  
**THE PUBLIC SERVICE COMMISSION**  
**OF SOUTH CAROLINA**  
**DOCKET NO. 2013-201-WS**

IN RE: Application of Utilities Services of South )  
Carolina for Adjustment of Rates and )  
Charges and Modifications to Certain )  
Terms and Conditions for the Provision of )  
Water and Sewer Service )  
\_\_\_\_\_)

**DIRECT TESTIMONY**

**OF**

**KAREN SASIC**

1 **Q. WOULD YOU PLEASE STATE YOUR NAME AND BUSINESS ADDRESS?**

2 **A.** My name is Karen Sasic and my business address is 200 Weathersfield Avenue,  
3 Altamonte Springs, Florida, 32714-4027.

4 **Q. WHAT IS YOUR CURRENT POSITION OF EMPLOYMENT?**

5 **A.** I am the Director of Billing and Regulatory Relations for Utilities, Inc., with  
6 oversight responsibility for billing and regulatory customer complaints within the 15  
7 states we serve, which includes Utilities Services of South Carolina.

8 **Q. HOW LONG HAVE YOU BEEN EMPLOYED BY UTILITIES, INC.?**

9 **A.** Eighteen (18) years.

10 **Q. WHAT IS YOUR EDUCATIONAL AND EMPLOYMENT BACKGROUND?**

11 **A.** I hold an Associate's degree in Business Administration from Miami-Dade  
12 Community College with continued coursework in business from Florida International  
13 University. I began working with the company in 1995 as a Customer Service  
14 Representative. In 1998, I moved into the operations department as an Administrative  
15 Assistant. In 2001, I was promoted to Executive Assistant to the Vice President of  
16 Operations in our Florida office. In 2003, I was promoted to Regional Office Manager in  
17 our Florida office, overseeing the Customer Service for Florida Operations. In 2008, I  
18 took over management of the company's customer service functions for Louisiana. In  
19 November 2009, I was promoted to the position of Manager of Customer Service for the  
20 entire company. In January 2011, I was promoted to Director of Customer Care over  
21 customer service in our 3 call centers located in Altamonte Springs, Florida, Charlotte,  
22 North Carolina and Pahrump, Nevada as well as our Billing Department located in  
23 Northbrook, Illinois. In November 2012, as part of reorganization of departments, I

1 assumed the title of Director of Billing and Regulatory Relations. In addition, I have  
2 served on the National Association of Water Companies Customer Service Committee  
3 since March 2008.

4 **Q. WHAT DOES YOUR CURRENT POSITION ENTAIL?**

5 **A.** As Director of Billing and Regulatory Relations, I am responsible for the  
6 oversight of our Billing Department to ensure that customers receive timely and accurate  
7 bills. I am responsible for developing, evaluating and implementing procedures pertinent  
8 to the effective and efficient operation of the Billing Department. In addition, I provide  
9 regulatory support through customer complaint responses, data request responses, filing  
10 of testimony and appearance at hearings.

11 **Q. WHAT EXPERIENCE DO YOU HAVE IN TESTIFYING BEFORE STATE**  
12 **UTILITY COMMISSIONS?**

13 **A.** I have testified before this Commission in rate relief proceedings as well as rate  
14 relief proceedings in Indiana, Kentucky and Nevada. In addition, I have provided  
15 supporting data for staff testifying in rate relief proceedings in Arizona, Florida, Illinois,  
16 Indiana, Louisiana, Maryland, Nevada, North Carolina and Pennsylvania.

17 **Q. WHAT IS THE PURPOSE OF YOUR TESTIMONY IN THIS PROCEEDING?**

18 **A.** The purpose of my testimony is to describe Utilities Services of South Carolina's  
19 billing and to describe our results during the test year.

20 **Q. DURING THE TEST YEAR, WERE ALL UTILITIES SERVICES OF SOUTH**  
21 **CAROLINA'S BILLS ISSUED ON TIME?**

22 **A.** 98.8% of bills were issued on time during the test year.  
23

**Q. CAN YOU DESCRIBE WHAT ISSUES WOULD CAUSE BILLS TO BE DELAYED?**

**A.** Yes. During the test year, the less than 2% of bills that were delayed were the result of issues such as blocked access to the meter, fogged meter glass and water in the meter boxes.

**Q. ON THE SMALL PERCENTAGE OF OCCASIONS WHERE A BILLING DELAY OCCURS, HOW ARE YOUR CUSTOMERS IMPACTED BY A BILLING DELAY?**

**A.** Other than receiving their bill a few days later than normal, there is no impact. They still have the same amount of time to pay their bill. Any balance unpaid after 25 days of the billing date are assessed a late payment charge of 1 ½%.

**Q. DOES UTILITIES SERVICES OF SOUTH CAROLINA OR “USSC” MEASURE ITS PERFORMANCE IN THE TIMELINESS AND ACCURACY OF BILLS?**

**A.** Yes. USSC has developed Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) to objectively measure performance and bring accountability to the billing process. The results for the billing KPI’s adopted by USSC for the test year and the first two quarters of 2013 are indicated below:

		2012				2013	
Objectives	Measure	1Q12	2Q12	3Q12	4Q12	1Q13	2Q13
Timely & Accurate Billing	% of Bills On-Time	98.5%	98.9%	99.3%	98.9%	99.3%	99.4%
	% of Accurate Bills	99.5%	99.7%	99.4%	99.5%	99.6%	99.7%

1 **Q. EVEN THOUGH YOUR KPIS DEMONSTRATE TIMELY AND ACCURATE**  
2 **BILLING PRACTICES, DOES USSC CONTINUE TO WORK TO IMPROVE ITS**  
3 **BILLING PRACTICES?**

4 **A.** Yes. While our goal is to have bills that are 100% timely and accurate, we are  
5 encouraged by our results and continue to work toward improving our billing and meter  
6 reading practices. Our billing personnel work closely with the meter readers to ensure  
7 they are obtaining timely and accurate meter readings each month. The communication  
8 between the office and the field helps to identify meter reading issues early in the billing  
9 process minimizing delayed bill issuance to USSC customers.

10 **Q. CAN YOU DESCRIBE HOW USSC CUSTOMER BILLS ARE CALCULATED?**

11 **A.** USSC customers are billed in accordance with the rates established in Docket No.  
12 2007-286-WS Order No. 2013-77. Customer bills provide a line item breakdown of all  
13 approved charges. Residential water customers are billed a water base facility charge of  
14 \$16.53 per unit and a usage charge of \$5.40 per 1,000 gallons. Residential water  
15 distribution only customers are billed a water base facility charge of \$16.53 per unit, and  
16 usage charge of \$2.91 per 1,000 gallons. In addition, USSC also passes through the  
17 charges imposed by bulk water providers on a pro rata basis without markup.  
18 Wastewater customers are billed \$41.39 per unit for house, condominium, villa,  
19 apartment or commercial. Wastewater mobile home customers are billed \$29.74 per unit.  
20 USSC sewage collection only customers are billed \$26.64 per unit in addition to the pass  
21 through of the treatment charges imposed by bulk wastewater providers on a pro rata  
22 basis without markup.

23 **Q. DOES THIS CONCLUDE YOUR TESTIMONY?**

1    A.            Yes.